Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4156th meeting

Thursday, 15 June 2000, 11.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Levitte	(France)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Gurirab
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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00-48158 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I propose to invite the members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, as well as Zambia, the Representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, Special Envoy of the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, current Chairman of the Organization of Africa Unity, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Messahel (Algeria) took a seat at the Council table.

The *President* (*spoke in French*): I invite the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola, His Excellency Mr. George Chicoti, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chicoti (Angola) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ndombasi (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Rwanda, His Excellency Mr. André Bumaya, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bumaya (Rwanda) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and for Regional Cooperation of Uganda and Chairman of the Political Committee, His Excellency Mr. Amama Mbabazi, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the Minister for Presidential Affairs of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Eric Silwamba, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Silwamba (Zambia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr. Misheck Muchetwa, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Muchetwa (Zimbabwe) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I welcome the presence at the Council table of His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia and President of the General Assembly, who represents the last of the States signatories to the Lusaka Agreement and whose country is also a member of the Security Council.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Dominique Kanku, Head of External Relations of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Mr. Claver Pashi, head of the delegation of the RCD-ML to take a seat at the Council table.

I would like to inform the Council that Mr. Emile Ilunga, head of the delegation of the RCD-Goma, who at this moment is still on an aeroplane, will be joining us this afternoon.

I now invite Mr. Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to acknowledge and welcome the presence of the Secretary-General at this important meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

As President of the Security Council, I now have the honour of addressing the Council as well as the members of the Political Committee.

I should like warmly to welcome the Ministers members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Agreement; the Minister for Presidential Affairs of Zambia; the Special Envoy of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and Mr. Kamel Morjane, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

I should like, with the agreement of the Secretary-General, to ask the Special Representative to convey to all of the observers and teams now working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our feelings of admiration and solidarity. They are doing admirable work in particularly difficult conditions. I hope that Mr. Morjane will express to them, on behalf of the Council, the extent of our admiration for them.

I would particularly like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence here. He has delayed his departure on an important trip to the Middle East so as to be here today. I would also like to thank him for his full and courageous report, which will enlighten our work and serve as a work of reference.

Those present will recall that the idea for this meeting came out of a meeting that took place on 6 May in Lusaka between the members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Agreement and the seven members of the Security Council who undertook the Council's first-ever visit to Africa. That 6 May meeting followed the Security Council meeting that was held in this Chamber on 24 January, attended by representatives of the countries signatories to the Lusaka Agreement. Ambassador Holbrooke took the initiative to hold that dialogue. The dialogue between the Security Council and the signatories to the Lusaka Agreement attests to the will of the Council to actively respond each time the United Nations is called upon to contribute to a settlement of a crisis in Africa.

The United Nations is not abandoning Africa. On the contrary, as we are aware, the main part of the Security Council's agenda is devoted to Africa. However, it must be said that the context that we find ourselves in today is particularly difficult. It is difficult, first of all, because the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone is now confronting serious problems. It is also difficult because everyone has in mind the war being waged between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has inflicted suffering on two peoples and caused heavy losses to the two countries involved in the conflict. Of course, each crisis has its own specific characteristics, but we must be aware that the difficulties in Sierra Leone are causing reluctance on the part of the troop-contributing countries to commit themselves in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

What kind of analysis can we make today of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo? One very positive element is the fact that there have been genuine efforts on the part of all the countries of the region to achieve a settlement — the Lusaka Agreement. I would like to pay tribute to the outstanding role that President Chiluba of Zambia played in that respect. The Lusaka Agreement was signed almost one year ago, on 10 July 1999. The Agreement provided for a settlement of the crisis in 360 days. Where are we now, almost two years after the beginning of the conflict and almost one year after the signing of the Lusaka Agreement?

Unquestionably, efforts have been made in the right direction. On the part of the belligerents themselves, a ceasefire was declared, and a disengagement agreement was concluded on 8 April in Kampala. Here in New York, the United Nations fulfilled its part of the contract. The Security Council decided, on 24 February last, on the establishment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), with 500 military observers and a force of 5,000. Unfortunately, despite that unquestionable progress, the bad news has been increasing, and today the global balance sheet is dramatically negative in five areas.

First, hostilities are continuing. They are continuing in the province of Equateur. They resumed

there at the end of last year and have been taking place on a regular basis ever since. Fighting has also been continuing in Kasai since March. There has been uninterrupted violence in Kivu. Finally, in Kisangani, fighting broke out in August last year, at the beginning of May and again, in a particularly bloody manner, at the beginning of this month.

Secondly, the cost in human life of this conflict is ever higher. The Secretary-General's report has emphasized the tragic situation of the displaced persons and the enormous food needs. We are receiving information through non-governmental organizations and religious organizations regarding violence and massacres, particularly in Kivu. These organizations are also indicating to us that there are inter-ethnic clashes in the north-east.

Last week the international press published the results of a study by humanitarian organizations, which says that in two years of war, 1.7 million individuals have perished in the east of the Congo. They have been the victims of massacres, or have died attempting to flee violence, or have perished because humanitarian assistance could not reach them due to conditions of insecurity. We are not trying to get into a war of statistics and figures here, but we are trying to see reality as it is. For two years now, hundreds of thousands of deaths have been recorded in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirdly, as regards the process of reconciliation between the Congolese themselves, the national dialogue provided for by the Lusaka Agreement remains blocked. To be sure, the facilitator of the national dialogue, selected by the Congolese parties, with the assistance of the OAU, has made some preliminary assessments. Preliminary consultations have taken place. The Security Council, which welcomed the facilitator in New York in January and again in April, expressed its full support to him, and we will be having a meeting tomorrow with his representative, Minister Archibald Mogwe.

But today the Council is deeply concerned by the impasse in the national dialogue and by the lack of cooperation on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the facilitator. The events in Cotonou are particularly alarming to us. The settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be based on genuine reconciliation among the Congolese within the framework of the national dialogue.

Fourthly, the lack of security and the parties' lack of goodwill is hampering the deployment of MONUC. The continuation of hostilities is endangering the deployment of phase II of the Mission. The failure on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to respect the commitments undertaken in the framework of the status-of-forces agreement, but also on the part of the rebels through their blocking of the movements of the force, is unacceptable. This runs counter to the commitments that have been undertaken. Finally, the recent manifestations of hostility to MONUC in Kinshasa are not acceptable. The United Nations is in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help bring about peace, and the United Nations must be helped in turn.

Fifthly, the resumption of hostilities on 5 June between Ugandan and Rwandan troops in Kisangani was a brutal aggravation of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These hostilities seemed to toll the bell for the Lusaka Agreement; they pitted two formerly friendly countries against each other. The particularly unjustifiable nature of the confrontations between two foreign armies on the soil of a third country — namely, the Democratic Republic of the Congo — must be emphasized. These hostilities have caused numerous Congolese civilian casualties. At least 300 have died and 1,500 have been wounded. Two foreign military presences, motivated by security reasons, are today becoming a major source of insecurity.

I must state that these events have deeply shocked the entire international community and prompted an immediate and unanimous response: "Enough fighting. Withdraw your forces from Kisangani. Implement immediately the Agreement that your Presidents concluded in the presence of the Security Council members."

We see perfectly well that we are now at a decisive moment. In his report to the Council on Tuesday, the Secretary-General set the tone, and everyone is familiar with that report. The war must cease immediately, he told us, and he is right. With regard to Kisangani, from bad events perhaps something good can emerge. The tragedy of Kisangani must serve for all of us as an electric shock that will trigger the total, rapid, even accelerated

implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. That Agreement remains our touchstone. At this moment, I express the hope that all of the prisoners of war will be released even before the end of our work, to demonstrate that, yes, the will does exist, and that movement in the right direction is possible.

On behalf of the Security Council, I say to the members of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Agreement who have come to join us in New York that we hope to consider the situation in depth with you. We hope together to provide a new impetus to the Lusaka peace process and to find a way, with you as partners, to overcome the present crisis. You had hoped that the United Nations would be your partner, and we have agreed to be that partner. Together, during these two days, let us take the necessary decisions. Let us restore hope, and let us bring peace to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to all of the peoples of Central Africa who are waiting so desperately for that peace. Together let us manifest that will. As our British friends say,

(spoke in English)

"Where there is a will, there is a way".

(spoke in French)

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Amama Mbabazi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Uganda in his capacity as Chairman of the Political Committee.

Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda): On behalf of the Political Committee and on my own behalf, I wish to express our gratitude to you, Mr. President, to the members of the Security Council delegation who visited our region last month, and to the Security Council as a whole for the invitation it extended to the Political Committee to come to New York to share information and exchange views on the process of pacification of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We come with the hope and confidence that this interaction will result in greater and faster engagement of the United Nations in this process, for which the people of Congo and the region have waited so long.

The Agreement for a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, popularly known as the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, was freely negotiated, agreed and signed by all the then belligerents. It was welcomed and adopted by the international community, including the United Nations, as the best formula for the resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Agreement addresses the two dimensions of the conflict — that is, the internal Congolese political question and the regional security concerns of the Congo itself and those of its neighbours. It provides, among other things, for the cessation of hostilities; the creation of a new political dispensation in the Congo through inter-Congolese political negotiations; the disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of all of the armed groups in the Congo; and the withdrawal of all foreign forces. It further provides for the normalization of the situation at the borders of the Congo with a view to stopping any illicit trafficking of arms and the infiltration of armed groups across the borders.

The United Nations was requested, in pursuance of its duty to maintain international peace and security, to take charge of the implementation of the Agreement. The parties also created the Joint Military Commission (JMC), where they are all represented, to develop this process of implementation.

Although, as you correctly observed, Mr. President, the timetable for the implementation of the Agreement, signed on 10 July 1999 by the States parties and in August by the armed Congolese rebellion, has not been met, the Agreement has held, the various violations, many of which you referred to, Mr. President, notwithstanding. These violations occurred largely because the mechanism the Agreement put in place to manage the implementation process has to date not been fully operationalized.

The United Nations initially adopted what appeared to be a very cautious approach to its involvement in this implementation process. The Political Committee was therefore delighted when last January the Security Council decided to pay great attention to the conflict in the Congo, a process that has culminated in our meeting with the Council today.

We appreciated very deeply the visit of the Security Council delegation, led by Richard Holbrooke, to the region last month. For the first time we felt that, as a result of that visit, a partnership between us and the United Nations had begun in earnest. We therefore have come to New York in that spirit of partnership in the continuing dialogue, begun on 6 May in Lusaka, on how to quickly and realistically achieve our commonly

shared desire to bring peace not only to the Democratic Republic of the Congo but to the region as a whole.

The Political Committee, working together with the Joint Military Commission and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), under the able and dedicated leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Kamel Morjane, and his staff, has laid the groundwork for the implementation of the Lusaka accord. We adopted on 8 April last in Kampala the plan for the disengagement and redeployment of forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Although its timetable has not been fully met, sub-plans for the disengagement of forces in each area were prepared, but they could not be finalized because the JMC and MONUC lack the resources required to carry out verification of the information given by each party.

We look forward to discussing this question of lack of resources with the Council during our visit here, so that we can overcome this debilitating limitation to the process of implementation. We expect that when the planning teams of the JMC and MONUC have verified the information given to them by each party and new defensive positions have been agreed, then the forces will begin to disengage to create the 30-kilometre-wide disengagement zone.

The Political Committee, at its last meeting in Lusaka, considered and adopted mechanisms for the disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of members of all of the armed groups.

On the question of the release and exchange of prisoners of war, the Political Committee requested the parties concerned to expedite the process by quickly complying with the requirements of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. I have reliable information that all of the parties have since done so. I should expect the release and exchange of prisoners of war to commence by the end of this week. I share the Council's optimism that this could begin even in the course of our deliberations here in New York.

On the issue of the inter-Congolese political negotiations, the national dialogue has not commenced. The Political Committee, however, welcomed the holding of the preparatory meeting in Cotonou, Benin, on 6 June, as a positive step in the right direction. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Sir Ketumile Masire for his efforts in facilitating the national dialogue and called on all of the Congolese to honour their obligations under the Agreement.

It is clear that the implementation of Lusaka has not gone according to the plan we originally worked out. Indeed, the Political Committee recognizes that there are enormous challenges to the implementation of this accord. The most recent challenge — which you referred to, Mr. President — was the fighting in Kisangani between the Rwandan and Ugandan forces. The Committee expressed its concern over this regrettable development, and, while welcoming the efforts to bring the situation in Kisangani back to normal, called on Rwanda and Uganda to immediately bring an end to the fighting and to implement the agreement between them for the demilitarization of Kisangani. I am glad to inform the Council that the fighting has since stopped.

The Political Committee restates the reaffirmation by our leaders last January of our strong commitment to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and reiterates our determination for its full and expeditious implementation. All we ask of the United Nations and the international community as a whole is that they lend us their unqualified support in the implementation of this accord, which we freely reached among ourselves.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Richard Holbrooke, Permanent Representative of the United States, who headed the Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and who undertook the laudable initiative of holding the summit of 24 January in this very Chamber.

Mr. Holbrooke (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for joining us today.

I thank you, Mr. President of the General Assembly, for descending from the high podium to join us to represent your own country. It is an honour to have two Presidents in the room today, you and Ambassador Levitte. I take your presence here as being of enormous significance to all of us.

I would like to express to you, Ambassador Levitte — the President of the Security Council — our country's very great appreciation for the leadership that you and France have taken on behalf of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I want to thank all of our friends and colleagues from the Lusaka process, who hosted us with such graciousness and generosity in Lusaka on 6 and 7 May, for again making the long journey to New York. Their presence here represents their commitment to finding a solution to the problems of the Congo. I hope that the world, which is focused on those problems, understands that everyone is here voluntarily to help solve them.

I am particularly honoured in that regard to speak after my friend, Minister Amama Mbabazi of Uganda, one of the most distinguished statesmen of Africa, whom I have now had the pleasure to work with increasingly in recent months and whose speech deserves careful perusal by all of us.

And, of course, I am delighted at the presence of the other representatives in the Chamber, and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Morjane, who is doing an extremely good job under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

This is an important day for all of us, as we proceed with this long odyssey. Although Minister Mbabazi was gracious in referring to the American month, in January, discussions really began earlier than that. I want to pay tribute to the presidency of the British in the month of December, and to Sir Jeremy Greenstock and Ambassador Eldon, for starting the process. This process has now gone on for many months. Let the world see that the United Nations is not turning away from Africa, and let the world see that there is no double standard. Africa is at the centre of our attention. This is doubly true, as today as we are dealing simultaneously with two other major African issues: Sierra Leone and the Ethiopia/Eritrea problem. There will be separate meetings going on concurrently on the latter issue, in conjunction with the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

But the problems remain, and they have become more serious in recent days in at least two areas, as Minister Mbabazi's comments made clear. The people of the Congo are looking to us to help find a way out of the hell in which they have been living for so long. They look to us to help them build lives not defined by conflict. There have been a lot of statements in recent months about how the people of the Congo need peace, but these statements — many of them made here around this historic horseshoe in this historic Chamber — have not yet been acted on.

Thirty-six days ago, Mr. President, you and I were in the region with out colleagues from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Mali, Tunisia and Namibia on behalf of the entire Security Council. We were greatly honoured to represent all of you, and I think we did a fairly good job in carrying the weight of the United Nations into the Great Lakes. However, I am not sure where we are today. Nonetheless, I do note that the delegation — comprised of three African nations, three European nations and one country from neither Europe nor Africa, the United States — symbolized our common commitment. I would stress again that the reason that the Latin American and Asian representatives were not with us was that they had gone to Kosovo on a parallel mission.

When you decided last month to convene today's meeting, Mr. President, we had anticipated that we could build momentum. But the events of the last two weeks have changed the nature of this meeting.

Let me start, as you did, Sir, with Kisangani, and let me be honest with my friends from both Rwanda and Uganda. There is no excuse for what happened in Kisangani. There was no excuse when the fighting began around 3 or 4 May. The immediate cessation of that fighting, after the 8 May ceasefire negotiated by the Security Council, was promising, but in the last few weeks the fighting resumed with an extraordinarily high level of intensity, leaving hundreds of people killed and thousands wounded and causing enormous damage to the infrastructure of Kisangani — damage that the international community will have to pay to clean up, otherwise it will not be done, thereby diverting resources from long-term reconstruction and essential health and education needs. That resumption is one of the most troubling things I have ever seen in my career in diplomacy. I am talking now not about the initial fighting, but about the resumption of fighting a few weeks ago.

I agree with Minister Mbabazi that there is now a ceasefire in place and that we have to lock it in. But it is a fragile ceasefire, and as the Secretary-General has so correctly warned us in meeting after meeting, we are facing a gap between the ceaesfire, which took effect a few days ago, and the arrival of any peacekeeping forces. We must be honest with ourselves: it is more difficult now to get peacekeeping forces than it was a few weeks ago precisely because of the events in Kisangani. It is more dangerous. It is more problematical. Governments and their populations have

more reservations. And it will be harder to fund those efforts because of what happened in Kisangani. So let us be honest about that in this Chamber.

I personally am not interested in a court of inquiry into who started Kisangani. The leaders of both sides have been very clear with all of us that it was the other side that started it. Based on similar experiences that I have been involved with in places like Bosnia, Kosovo and Cambodia, I am certain that we will never get to the bottom of who started it. The issue is to stop it permanently and never to let it happen again. That can be done only with the highest level of political leadership.

I salute you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your around-the-clock and tireless efforts with the leaders in the region to stop that fighting. Without your personal involvement, I think the chances are very high that the fighting would still be going on.

As for the fighting in Equateur Province between the armed forces of the Congo and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), that too is a serious problem. It is threatening to bring the war closer to the major population centres. I say it quite frankly today, in the presence of the signatories to the Lusaka Agreement — and, in this case in particular, in the presence of the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the representative of the MLC — that we need to see a willingness on your part to halt the fighting.

Let me turn now to the national dialogue. Again, I speak with great respect for the sovereign Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But I must say, in all candor, what my Government has already said publicly. I am obligated and obliged to repeat here in public that we do not believe that the renunciation of the facilitator appointed by the OAU and attacks on the national dialogue can be regarded as anything other than an attack on the Lusaka peace process. If there are differences between any parties in this Chamber and the facilitator, let those be ironed out. But let us not attack the process itself unless we are ready to confront the extraordinary implications of that. I have heard the problems that the Government in Kinshasa has with the national dialogue. May be some of them are justified. But an attack on the process itself can only be regarded as an attack on Lusaka.

The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement is one of the few things standing between order in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its degeneration into warlord-dominated, resource-driven satrapies. Last January, when we in this Chamber sat with the seven Presidents of the region, a commitment was made to redouble our efforts for peace. I hope that that will be the result of this very important meeting that you are chairing today, Mr. President, only one level below the chief-of-State level.

In order to bolster the peace process, the Secretary-General has recommended the reordering of some of the Lusaka tasks, particularly the sequencing of foreign troop withdrawals. He suggests that priority be given to the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan forces from the Kisangani area. I think that this recommendation is extremely appropriate, given recent events. That is one of the major things we will be discussing. But, as I support the Secretary-General's position, I would like to underscore a few critical points.

First of all, in no way does prioritizing the withdrawal of the forces that fought each other in Kisangani diminish the long-standing call of the Security Council, which is on the record in resolutions, for the withdrawal of all — I repeat, all — foreign forces. We are not in any way, shape or form abandoning Lusaka by accepting, as I hope and believe we should, the prioritization recommended to us by the Secretary-General.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for all parties to abandon all support to non-signatory armed groups, particularly the ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) and Interahamwe. The fact that these groups are still allowed to stay in business is truly unacceptable. They are among the most odious groups in Africa, if not in the world, and they must be dealt with through concerted regional action.

Thirdly, a discussion of withdrawing Rwandan and Ugandan forces should not in any way detract from the obligations of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in the national dialogue, to allow other Congolese parties the same right, and to abide by the results of the process.

And fourthly, in regard to this point, let us not let this discussion detract from the legitimate need to take into account the security concerns of Rwanda and of Uganda. Those are legitimate — although the explosion of fighting in Kisangani, which has nothing to do with those needs, was extraordinarily lamentable.

We cannot allow a situation occur where the ex-FAR and Interahamwe resume their 1995-1996 campaign of terror inside Rwanda.

All of this should be done to strengthen Lusaka. Let us recall again that this is not an outside-imposed agreement, but an African initiative: as Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim put it, an African solution to an African problem.

There are some who say that Congo's struggle and the slow progress of Lusaka somehow prove that in some places failure is certain — that people are simply predisposed to killing each other. I heard this in Bosnia; I heard it in Kosovo; I heard it in Viet Nam; and in an earlier era we heard it in regard to the great European Powers, which have finally, after a century of brutality, put their internal differences behind them so that, today, wars in the central part of Europe, once so common, are no longer possible. I hope that we will see, in our lifetimes and in our professional careers, the leaders of Africa reach the same level of achievement. If they do so, they will have done it much faster than the Europeans did, but I hope they can — as Ambassador Levitte so eloquently, but I regret to say unsuccessfully, put it to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi when we were in Addis Ababa four or five days before that war broke out — learn from Europe's mistakes.

I categorically reject the notion that Africa is not ready for democracy, or that it needs "strong men" or dictators to ensure stability, or that among certain peoples or tribes conflict is inevitable. Such opinions, which we all heard in regard to Bosnia as well, are uninformed and, in subliminal form at a minimum, carry a racist connotation. They were wrong in Bosnia; they were wrong in Kosovo; they are wrong in Africa.

Let us also stand together to reject the notion that has gained some prominence among commentators that some States have become "failed States". States do not fail; leaders do. Much is made of the artificial nature of African borders, and many claim that this makes conflicts inevitable. I share the concern about those borders and about the way they were drawn in the late nineteenth century. But those were the borders that the countries of Africa chose to maintain when they became independent. And once having made that decision, the leaders must figure out a way to live within those boundaries. Or, if they wish to change them, they may change them voluntarily, as happened in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, but not through wars.

All of this means that we cannot give up hope. Leadership can make a difference; it must make a difference. Last January, when we embarked on the "month of Africa", we said that 2000 would be the "year of Africa", and you, Mr. President, have set a very high standard by maintaining the attention of the Security Council with respect to these issues. At that time the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe reminded us that our commitment to peace efforts — from the many efforts of the United Nations around the world to our own commitment in the United States, for instance, to the Middle East peace process — must be strong enough to survive numerous setbacks, some of them catastrophic and seemingly fatal. The representative of Zimbabwe warned us that in Africa, like everywhere else, we must be prepared to accept setbacks and not let them deter us from moving ahead. I believe that one should accept good advice, especially when it comes from such an esteemed colleague. Setbacks are, unfortunately, part of any peace process, but they should not diminish our resolve; they should increase it.

In conclusion, let me remind us all that we have come here today to bolster a peace process that, while imperilled, is one to which we are all committed. We have not come here out of a sense of charity, or simply to right past wrongs — although that must be done — but because we all recognize that peace in the Congo and peace and democracy throughout Africa are in the national interests of us all: Europeans, Asians, Americans, others in the Western hemisphere, friends and neighbours alike.

As we proceed with our discussions today and tomorrow, and as we move forward in the coming weeks, I hope we will all draw inspiration from what Ambassador Greenstock, Ambassador van Walsum and Ambassador Andjaba saw when they made their trip to Kananga a month ago: thousands of ordinary Congolese people lining the streets of that city, deep, deep in the heart of a beleaguered and isolated area, thousands of ordinary Congolese shouting, "Peace, peace, peace". Let us help those people fulfil their hopes and dreams. This, members of the Council and my friends from the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement, is the best possible reason for us to continue working for implementation of the Lusaka

Agreement and for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Yerodia Aboulaye Ndombasi.

Mr. Ndombasi (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I find myself in a position that reminds me of the teachings of the "Spanish Machiavelli", Baltazar Gracián y Morales, about what one should be and what one should do, in his book *The Courtier's Oracle*. I appear here as a courtier, trying to walk on eggs without crushing them, and obliged to reassure, to explain and to take a position.

At the outset, I convey to you, Mr. President, and to the other members of the Council my heartfelt congratulations on your initiative following the visit of the Security Council mission to us in Africa.

I should also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China and convey to him our gratitude and our congratulations on his success in carrying out his mandate as President of the Council last month. This is the moment to take advantage of the good omens for your mandate as it begins, Mr. President, and for us to pay an emphatic tribute while voicing the hope that the work to be done under your leadership will be crowned with success so that a man of the court, like myself, will not vacillate.

The Lusaka Accords, United Nations resolutions and the United Nations Charter are symbols that guide us, the Congolese of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to show good will throughout and readiness to hasten the end to the war to begin national reconciliation.

Here, in this building, President Laurent-Désiré Kabila addressed the Council, and the terms, the words and the meaning he imparted are still alive in the minds of members to show that what I am saying is not empty, flattering rhetoric, that rather it reflects commitments, assurances and clarifications I wish to provide during my statement. The arrival and address of President Kabila prompted a great deal of hope, as it led to the adoption of resolution 1291 (1999). That followed the adoption of resolution 1234 (1999), which is still alive with the potential it affords us to bring a speedy end to war.

This good will of all heads of States that are signatories of the Lusaka Accords is being manifested through subsequent provisions, particularly those of Kampala, which set out the process for establishing a climate of security for our people and for United Nations forces, who, it goes without saying, benefit from enhanced security when they are operating in a country that is not at war.

For us the mere presence of uninvited foreign forces is an act of war, and nothing can ensure the security necessary to offer to the troop-contributing countries who send their children to help us solve our problems. That security is unstable and fraught with unpredictable elements, since uninvited foreign armies occupy the country and push their hostilities to the point of fighting each other.

In this year of the Africa Cup and Euro 2000, people can say whatever they please, because we do not know the hidden sense of their insults; a period to flex their muscles to the detriment of the infrastructure, the people and the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Congolese people, and this in accordance with the symbol which is the United Nations Charter. As long as these gladiator brothers are in our country, nothing can be guaranteed, since they are already in the third round of their championship. No one can guarantee what will happen from one moment to the next, even after a ceasefire. No one can guarantee that clashes will not resume if they remain on our territory.

What we call aggression against our country by our brothers from the east remains the key to further developments and the events that have prompted us to meet in a quest for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With regard to the security of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the recent evacuation of 20 of its representatives from Kisangani shows that as long as all these people are in our country fighting one another, there will be no security for MONUC. Evacuating them, given the logic of events, was an obligation.

As a Minister of State, I am duty-bound to provide assurances that the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs the United Nations, needs MONUC. It would be ridiculous for us to need MONUC, while at the same time we complicate its work. I can give the assurance of the Government of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo that, so far as United Nations force deployment and the preliminary MONUC deployment are concerned, in accordance with the status of forces agreement these forces will enjoy full freedom of movement; freedom not in the sense such as Kant spoke of, the freedom of indifference, as in: "I do what I like when I like and cross the street when there is a red light". Freedom is freedom of knowledge of cause, because you know the effect that a vehicle doing as it wishes can have on a body that crosses its path. Freedom is organized on the form — I discussed this with Mr. Morjane — of notification. It is only natural that as a sovereign Government we know when, who and where MONUC and United Nations aircraft will operate in our skies. This is not harassment. It is simply something designed to avoid having something unfortunate happen to these people who we need, as I said a little while ago, to get us out of this business, to put an end to the war and for us to be able to resume national reconstruction.

I must also provide assurances to the effect that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo negotiated, through me personally, the Lusaka Accords and President Kabila himself signed them.

We are in favour of the Lusaka Agreement and call for its full implementation, even if, for example, the timetable was set inconsistently with provisions of the Agreement. We did not exploit that inconsistency to call the Agreement itself into question. We are in favour of the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. Everyone should clearly understand that.

Of course, when the veil that shrouds the future is torn open, it will be easy to judge, but so long as the present remains blind, no one can forecast with precision what is going to happen. That is why the Lusaka Agreement was signed and only later did it become imperative for the dates on the timetable to be modified, although the urgency of implementation was never lessened. Let me repeat: we are in favour of the Lusaka Agreement and will give our all to ensure that its implementation is facilitated. My Government wants inter-Congolese dialogue to be facilitated. Of course, such facilitation is embodied in one person whom the Organization of African Unity has appointed and who has won the agreement of all parties.

My Government has reasons for believing that the current embodiment of that facilitation is no longer appropriate to the progress of the operation. We are in favour of facilitation. We have already asked the Organization of African Unity to appoint someone else who, with the consent of the parties, can facilitate dialogue among all Congolese.

Let me stress that, in the midst of all this, we are a sovereign Government that is continuing to govern. It may happen that a lack of prior coordination or synchronicity between one particular facilitator and our sovereign decisions leads to contradictions. Let me assure the Council, however, that we favour facilitation. We feel that, with respect to ensuring that the role of facilitator is filled, the ball is in the United Nations court. I hope this is done soon, contrary to prior experience, when it took a long time to fill the post of facilitator, through no fault of our own but as a result of repeated obstructions from other sides. We are prepared to work with the new embodiment of facilitator. Let me repeat that we are for facilitation and the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

So far as we are concerned, the Security Council's horizons are crisscrossed with references guiding its actions. These are, in addition to the Lusaka Agreement, which we have signed, the resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations Charter — the trinity of our Bible. That is how we see it.

In conclusion, let me reassure the Council about MONUC, which we summoned to our country. When intolerable and repeated massacres occurred in parts of our country not under our control, our people were compelled to express their profound outrage at the incompetence of the United Nations forces and their inability to launch such an operation. I know that some rocks have been hurled at the United Nations building, but I do not believe that Mr. Morjane is ready to offer himself as a target for those directed at Mr. Bernard Kouchner. We will see to it that such incidents do not recur, though we do understand how young students, in a city of 5 million that is up in arms and outraged, might throw some stones – Congolese stones, not Kosovar.

I give Mr. Morjane my word that he can work in complete freedom and in full safety and security. He knows that he can come to my office whenever he wants and that we have devised an entire system to facilitate contacts between ourselves and MONUC. We have established a general government bureau for MONUC affairs. The commissioner, Mr. Ntuaremba, is here with me. The bureaucratic apparatus may create

occasional difficulties, but we are determined to solve any that may arise as we deal with the Security Council.

I would urge the Council to ensure that its own resolutions — adopted with unanimity one after the other, which is rare in itself — support the recent progress made by our brother Mr. Kofi Annan, who recently emerged from an atmosphere similar to that described by Conor Cruise O'Brien in his book *To Katanga and Back*. The Council must implement its own resolutions so that this remarkable progress, unprecedented in its boldness and courage, can be exploited to hasten the end of the war and the restoration of stability. That being our final aim, let us turn water into electricity, as Paul Éluard put it, and make each man — even the man to my right — our brother. That is the aim of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We expect the Council's decisions to speed up that process. I assure members that my Government is committed to making inter-Congolese dialogue easier — to facilitating facilitation and creating conditions conducive to calm, efficient work undertaken in secure and safe conditions by the United Nations forces. We call on all to ensure that this is handled boldly by, for example, linking phases II and III, which I hope are soon to follow, in order to hasten the process. The fact is that we are in a hurry.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the official public stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will resume its consideration of the item at a private meeting to take place later today in this Chamber.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.